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Manuscript collectors and collections from the Southern Silk Road

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This article attempts to give a survey of the major manuscript collections from Khotan together with a brief mention of ‘Khotanese’ manuscripts from Dunhuang — by which I mean manuscripts related to Khotan linguistically or else coming from there. Adopting a basically chronological approach I use the Stein collection, since it is the earliest for which full archaeological details are recorded, as a base-line for contextualising subsequent largely unprovenanced collections from Khotan. The results enhance what we may deduce about manuscript cultures on the Southern Silk Road, and additionally document the history of the trade in antiquities at the end of the 19th century for the following fifty years or so.

The Kingdom of Khotan and Dunhuang

Situated on the trade route between China, India, Sogdiana and Iran, the kingdom of Khotan occupied a key position and was famous from early times as a religious and trading centre through which passed monks, merchants, soldiers and diplomats of many different races, each exerting an influence which can be seen in the archaeology and written records of the area. Legends ascribe the city's founding to the time of Aśoka in the 3rd century BCE and it survived as a separate kingdom until the beginning of the 11th century CE. The main languages of Khotan, altogether written in about ten different scripts, were Khotanese (Iranian), Gandhari and Sanskrit (Indic), Turkic, Tibetan and Chinese, but materials have also been found in Sogdian and New Persian.

Our earliest sources for the history of Khotan are the Chinese chronicles of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). From this period date the bi-lingual Chinese/Gandhari ‘Sino-Kharoshthī’ or ‘horse’ coins of Khotan and the spectacular textiles from the cemetery of Sampula. Written documents of the 3rd to 4th century from neighbouring Niya testify to a long-established connection between the Khotanese and the kingdom of Kroraina, but it is not until the 5th and 6th century CE that we find manuscripts in Khotanese, the native language of Khotan. From the 7th to the 9th century Khotan was continually under threat from the Tibetans, the Turks and the Chinese, nevertheless there were periods of stability under the Tibetans and Chinese, and it is from these centuries that the majority of written materials survive. During the 10th century close alliances were formed between the rulers of Khotan and Shazhou (Dunhuang). The Khotanese king Viśa’ Saṃbhava (912-967) married the daughter of Cao Yijin, governor of Dunhuang, and a Khotanese princess, depicted in Cave 61 at Dunhuang, married a later governor, Cao Yuanlu.

Very few written materials from Khotan itself survive from the 9th and 10th centuries, though many manuscripts in the Khotanese language were discovered in Cave 17 at Dun-

huang. One of the very few exceptions is **BnF Pelliot chinois 5538**¹ which is available online on the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) website. This is a letter sent in 970 by Viśa' Śūra (967-978), king of Khotan, addressed to his maternal uncle by marriage, Cao Yuanzhong, the great king (Ch. *Da wang*) of Shazhou (Dunhuang). The letter reports that Viśa' Śūra had led a successful expedition against Kashgar and had consequently been presented with wonderful things including wives, sons, an elephant and a thoroughbred valuable horse and the like² belonging to the defeated enemy, the Tajik Cong Xian (Khot. *Tcūm-hye:nā*)—who may in fact have been Viśa' Śūra's half-brother.³ This event is also mentioned in the Chinese *Songshi* (The History of Song [Dynasty]) which records a letter that reached Dunhuang in 971, perhaps the very same letter, announcing the defeat of Kashgar and offering to present a dancing elephant which had been captured there.⁴ The tables were turned however at the beginning of the 11th century when the Muslim Karakhanids finally conquered Khotan. By 1007, Yūsuf Qadr Khān was well established, according to Islamic sources, as the ruler of Khotan.

Early Central Asian manuscript discoveries

The story of today's collections began in 1890 with the chance purchase by Lieut H. Bower, while on official duty in Kashgar, of some leaves of a 5th century birchbark manuscript which had been discovered in a *stūpa* about 16 miles from Kucha. Its discovery was first announced to the scholarly world in 1891⁵ and it was quickly recognised as by far “the oldest Indian written book that is known to exist.”⁶ As a result European scholars suddenly became aware, not only of the existence of Buddhist manuscript remains in Central Asia, but of ones which were far older than had been previously thought to exist.

Nikolai Petrovsky, 1882–1903

As a direct result of this discovery, the Oriental Branch of the Russian Archaeological Society, in November 1891, sent a request to the Russian Consul General in Kashgar, N. F. Petrovsky, to try to collect similar manuscript treasures.⁷

Petrovsky was Consul in Kashgar from 1882 to 1903 during which time he supplied the Russian scholar Sergei Oldenburg⁸ on a regular basis with large numbers of manuscripts consisting of 582 items in Indian scripts: Sanskrit (251 items), Khotanese (297), and Tocharian, Old Uighur, Old Tibetan and North-Western Prakrit.⁹ These included the famous ‘Kashgar’ (so-called because it was first associated with Kashgar) *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*

1. http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Pelliot+chinois+5538.

2. See Bailey 1964.

3. Kumamoto 1986.

4. *Songshi* 490 “Yutian guo,” cited by Pulleyblank 1954, pp. 91-92.

5. Waterhouse, J. 1890 [1891], “Birch bark MS. from Kashgaria.” In *Proceedings, Asiatic Society of Bengal* (November 1890 [1891]), pp. 221-223, with plate.

6. Hoernle 1891, p. 64.

7. Minutes of the Meeting of the Oriental Branch of the Russian Archaeological Society. November 28, 1891. In: *Zapiski Vostochnago otdeleniia Russkago arkheologicheskago obshchestva* 6, 1–4, 1891 [1892], pp. ix-xi.

8. For a detailed assessment of Oldenburg's work and archival papers, see I. Tunkina, “The personal papers of Sergey F. Oldenburg as a source for the history of the Russian expeditions to Eastern Turkestan.” In *Tocharian texts in context*, Bremen, 2013, pp. 259-275.

9. M.I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya. “The role of N.F. Petrovsky in the formation of the Central Asiatic Manuscript Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies”. In *Turfan revisited*, Berlin: Reimer Verlag, 2004, pp. 361-2.

(‘Lotus *sūtra*’), the Khotanese ‘*Book of Zambasta*’, and a folio of the Kharoṣṭhī *Dhammapada*, about which see more below.

Dutreuil de Rhins and the Khotan Dhammapada, 1892

The next important discovery was the Khotan *Dhammapada*, dating from the 1st to 2nd century CE, which was acquired in 1892 by the explorers Dutreuil de Rhins (1846–1894) and Grenard (1866–1942). This was the first find to be discovered from Khotan and the only early discovery with a provenance, namely a cave in Gośringa hill (Kohmari) near Khotan. Other portions of the same manuscript were also acquired by Petrovsky in Kashgar and sent to Oldenburg in St Petersburg in February 1897. The manuscript was first presented at the 11th International Congress of Orientalists, Paris, in 1897 which Stein attended. The importance of this discovery, together with the recent acquisitions from Khotan, were, as Stein subsequently wrote,¹⁰ what determined him on his own expedition to Khotan.

*The British Collection of Antiquities from Central Asia: Hoernle I (1895–1901)*¹¹

Not wanting to be outdone by his Russian and French rivals, the Indologist Rudolf Hoernle, working in Calcutta as Government Epigraphist, in 1893 urged the Government of India to collect material which he asked to be sent to him to decipher. The Political agents at Kashgar and in Kashmir were instructed to acquire antiquities and manuscripts, and from 1895 onwards these were sent to Hoernle for examination.

As a result, between 1895 and 1902, the Government of India sent 23 consignments of manuscripts to Rudolf Hoernle to be deciphered. These consignments also included antiquities and formed what became known as the British Collection of Antiquities from Central Asia. Hoernle’s results were published in his reports between 1895 and 1902,¹² and the collection was finally deposited in the British Museum on 17 June 1902. While the antiquities remain there, the manuscripts were transferred to the British Library in 1973.

By 1901 the collection consisted of 530 coins, 77 seals, numerous terracottas, pottery and manuscripts in Sanskrit (7 substantial Buddhist manuscripts), Khotanese (parts of 6 Buddhist manuscripts and 69 documents), Tocharian (17 leaves of a medical manuscript), Uighur (24 documents), Chinese (12 documents) and Persian (4 documents). It also included works in unknown scripts: numerous sheets, codices and block-prints, all of which subsequently proved to be forgeries.¹³

Significant among the documents and Buddhist manuscripts included in this collection was an 8th century Khotanese document purchased in 1898 through Badruddin (**Or.6394/1**¹⁴), an order sent to the village headman (*spāta*) Sīḍaka in Gazata (Dandan Uiliq) regarding repayment of a debt incurred for purchase of cloth.

¹⁰ Stein 1901, p. 2.

¹¹ For more on the Hoernle collections see Sims-Williams 2009.

¹² Hoernle 1897, 1899, 1901.

¹³ For more on the Central Asian forgeries see Sims-Williams 2000.

¹⁴ http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.6394/1.

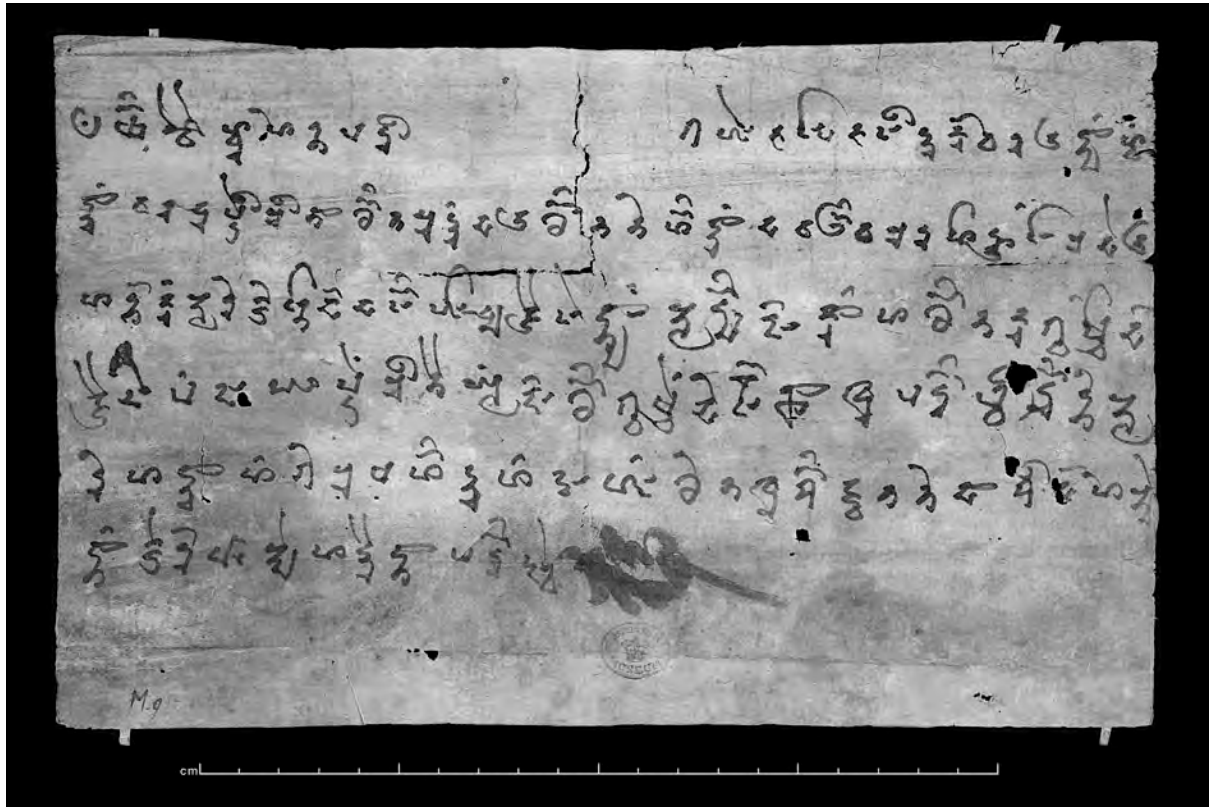


Fig. 1. **Or.6394/1.** An 8th century Khotanese document sent to the village headman Sīḍaka in Gazata (Dandan Uiliq) regarding repayment of a debt incurred for purchase of cloth. © The British Library Board

Sīḍaka was also mentioned in several other documents, both Khotanese and Chinese, including one dated 768 CE excavated by Stein at Dandan Uiliq (D.V.6) where his guide Turdi was able to point out the exact place where he had previously found documents which he had sold to Badruddin.



Fig. 2. **Or.6402B/1.3.**¹⁵ Leaf of the Khotanese Bhaiṣajyaguruvaīḍūryaprabharājasūtra. "The Lady Dūlakā ordered (this text) to be written together with her son the knower of the Tripiṭaka, the monk Jayabhadra and together with her brothers, the spāta Sīḍaka and the others, and with her sisters." © The British Library Board

By chance the addressee of **Or.6394/2** above, Sīḍaka of Gazata also appears as a patron in a Khotanese *Bhaiṣajyaguru* sutra which, according to the colophon, was commissioned by the Lady Dūlakā and her brothers, including the *spāta* Sīḍaka, and her sisters. Thus an undated buddhist text can be successfully located at Dandan Uiliq in the mid to late-eighth century.

¹⁵http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.6402B/1.3.

A key player in the formation of the 'British Collection' was George Macartney who represented the Government of India as Consul and subsequently Consul-General in Kashgar from 1890 until 1918. Like Petrovsky, Macartney was something of an antiquarian himself and as early as 1893, according to his wife,¹⁶ he had been acquiring manuscripts and antiquities in the bazar. Macartney not only provided manuscripts directly for Rudolf Hoernle, but was an invaluable source of help and advice for Aurel Stein during his first two Central Asian expeditions. In addition to supplying the British with manuscripts, Macartney also procured them for the Russian Consul, N. F. Petrovsky, and A. H. Francke and the Orientalist H. Köber during their expedition to Central Asia in 1914.



Fig. 3. Stein's **Photo 392/28(217)**.¹⁷ Group portrait of the Macartney family: Lady Catherine Macartney seated, flanked by her children Sylvia and Eric, Sir George Macartney standing behind, holding their younger son. Chini Bagh, Kashgar, 5 October 1913 © The British Library Board

Macartney's chief supplier of manuscripts from Khotan was an Afghan trader Badruddin, who acted as *Aqsaqal* (a kind of official representative) for the Government of India and as agent for miscellaneous 'treasure seekers.' Badruddin had been strongly recommended by Macartney to Stein right from the planning stage of his first expedition in 1899 and continued to advise him over a period of more than 30 years, additionally providing hospitality and material to almost every European visitor to Khotan.

¹⁶ Macartney, Lady Catherine. *An English Lady in Chinese Turkestan*. Oxford: Ernest Benn, 1931, p.55.

¹⁷ [http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Photo+392/28\(217\)](http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Photo+392/28(217)).



Fig. 4. Stein's *Photo 392/34(130)*.¹⁸ Badruddin Khan (centre), 7 December 1930 © The British Library Board

Stein's Central Asian expeditions

By 1900 an immense amount of material had been collected and forwarded to scholars for identification. Most of it, however, was without any provenance. Besides including manuscripts in completely unknown languages (Khotanese and Tocharian) there were also large numbers of blockprints and documents written in suspiciously strange scripts.

Stein's primary motivation was a desire to rectify this situation through using an archaeological methodology to systematically record the exact place where each artefact was discovered. His expeditions represent, even today, the most important fully documented excavations in the Southern Taklamakan. They were the first scientific archaeological expeditions and took place as a direct result of the increased importance attached to antiquities, especially written ones, and the inadequate information that was provided by treasure seekers and their agents.

¹⁸[http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Photo+392/34\(130\)](http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Photo+392/34(130)).

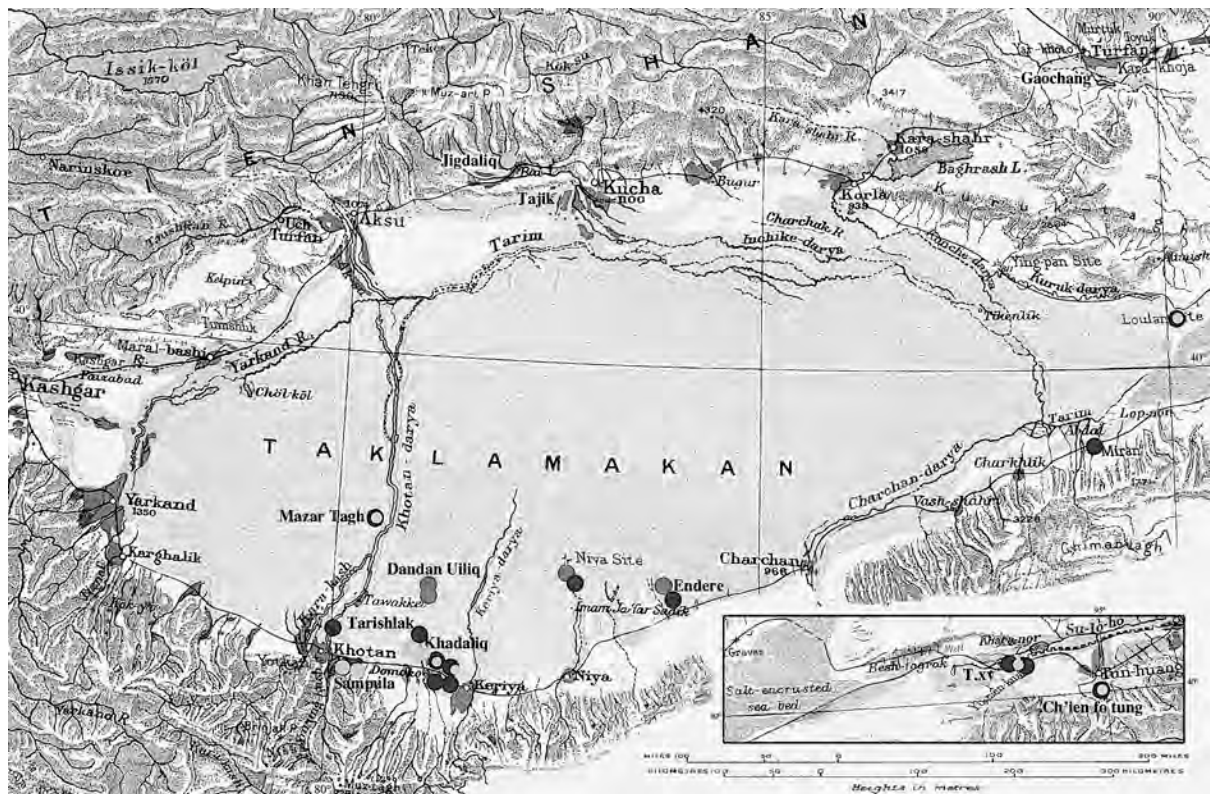


Fig. 5. Map after Stein of the Taklamakan desert showing the sites from which Stein obtained manuscripts on his first expedition (grey), his second (black) and his third (light grey).

Stein's First Expedition, 1900–1901

At the town of Khotan itself, only objects were acquired, including the inscribed fresco fragments brought by Stein's guide Turdi,¹⁹ while Buddhist texts in Khotanese and Sanskrit manuscript were discovered at Dandan Uiliq²⁰ and (Dandan) Rawak²¹ in addition to Khotanese and Chinese documents. It was here also that he found the early 9th century Judaeo-Persian letter DXIII (Or.8212/166).²² At Niya Stein found many Gandhari documents in Kharoshthī script and some Chinese (N.xv). At Endere he found manuscripts in Khotanese, Sanskrit and Tibetan (E.i) in addition to a few in Tocharian.

Stein's Second Expedition, 1906–1908

The main finds were at Khadaliq²³ consisting mostly of Sanskrit and Khotanese leaves in about 230 bundles and packets which were too numerous to number on site. At Mazar Toghrak Stein found Khotanese and Chinese documents including about 50 woodslips. Other sites in this area where he found manuscripts were Farhad Beg, Kara Yantak and Darabzan Dong. Further Gandhari documents were discovered at Niya and at Endere where Khotanese manuscripts were also found. The finds at Miran were mostly in Tibetan.

On his return from Dunhuang Stein visited the temple at Tarishlak²⁴ and the ruined fort

¹⁹ Stein 1907, p. 236.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

²² http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.8212/166.

²³ Stein 1921, p. 154.

²⁴ Stein 1921, p. 1274.

Mazar Tagh on the Khotan river. Numerous Tibetan and Khotanese finds were taken from rubbish deposits near the outer gate to the fort.²⁵

Stein's Third Expedition, 1913–1916

Most of the material from Khotan which was acquired during this expedition was brought to Stein rather than excavated by him. It was collected from Toghrak Mazar and Sampula near Khotan,²⁶ from Mazar Tagh²⁷ and from Balawaste,²⁸ Kuduk Köl,²⁹ Khadaliq, Domoko, Farhad Beg and Iledong in the Domoko oasis.³⁰

A few Southern Brahmi fragments were also apparently discovered at Jigdaliq in the North.

Language distribution of Stein manuscripts from the Southern Silk Road

	Sanskrit	Khotanese	Tibetan	Gandhari	Chinese	Other
Khadalik**	2883	558	15			
Iledong*	142	30	2			
Dandan Uilik	128	37			154	Judaeo-Persian 1
Endere	96	9	21	6	4	Tocharian 6
Miran	19		1500	1		Old Turkish 1
Balawaste*	18	65	3		8	
Sampula* and Toghrak Mazar	17	24			3	
Farhad Beg Yailaki**	13	12			1	
Domoko*	9	34	26		19	Old Turkish 1
Mazar Tagh**		168	1489		44	Sogdian 7
Mazar Toghrak		32			6	
Niya				703	11	

Table 1. Table showing the language distribution of Stein's manuscript finds from Khotan

*Mss collected on Stein's behalf and brought to him in 1913 and 1915

**Mss excavated with some additional purchases made in 1913 and 1915

These figures are based on information from published catalogues supplemented by data from the International Dunhuang Database (IDP). In some cases they represent small individual fragments, while in other cases as many as 60 *pothis* (leaves) so they should be regarded only as indicative. The manuscripts date almost exclusively from the 6th to the 8th centuries. By far the greatest number of items came from Khadaliq, consisting of mostly fragmentary Buddhist religious texts, mostly fragmentary. The Sanskrit texts far outnumber those in any other language. The Khotanese items represent a mixture of Buddhist texts and documents, especially at Dandan Uiliq. The majority of Tibetan manuscripts unsurprisingly come from the forts at Mazar Tagh and Miran. What is noteworthy is the almost complete lack of material in Sogdian despite the fact that we know there were Sogdian merchants.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1288.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 100–101.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 130, note 14a.

Major manuscript finds from Khotan 1900-1931 in European and North American collections

Stein's Central Asian expeditions have already been described above. All three received official Government backing. However, it is not generally realised that the Government of India, which had started collecting as early as 1893, continued to do so in the periods between Stein's expeditions until 1931. Manuscripts were again sent for decipherment to Rudolf Hoernle, by now retired and living in Oxford. After his death in 1917 the political agents stationed at Kashgar: George Macartney, Nicholas Fitzmaurice, Harold Harding, Clarmont Skrine, Frederick Williamson and George Sherriff all brought small collections usually purchased directly from Badruddin or in the bazar and deposited them on their return in the British Museum or the India Office Library (both collections now unified in the British Library).

Date	Collection	Present location
1900-1	Stein 1	British Library
1901-11	Hoernle 2	British Library
1902-3; 1908-9; 1910-14	Otani	Japan, China, Korea
1903	Crosby	Library of Congress
1905	Huntington	Yale University Library
1906	Mannerheim	Helsinki University Library?
1906-8	Stein 2	British Library
1913-14	Le Coq (T4)	Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften/ Staatsbibliothek
1913-15	Malov	Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St Petersburg
1913-16	Stein 3	British Library
1914	Francke/Korber	State Museum of Ethnography, Munich
ca.1916	Hoernle 3	British Library
ca.1918	Macartney	British Library
1923	Fitzmaurice	British Library
1923	Harding	British Library
1925	Skrine	British Library
1928	Trinkler/Bosshard	Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften/ Staatsbibliothek
1929	Hwang Wenbi	China
1930	Williamson	British Library
1930-31	Stein 4	British Library (photographs only)
1931	Sherriff	British Library
ca.1931	Ambolt (Hedin)	The National Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm

Table 2. Table showing the major manuscript finds from Khotan 1900-1931

The most important of these are described briefly in chronological order below.

The Hoernle collections 1902-1911: Hoernle 2

Between 1902 and 1911 the Government of India sent Rudolf Hoernle 11 further

consignments. Eight included material from Khotan. They were nearly all acquired through Badruddin and were described in accompanying documentation as found in the Taklamakan Desert or in the neighbourhood of Khotan.

Altogether these consignments yielded the following approximate figures: Sanskrit (4,726 pieces varying from whole leaves to small fragments of which about 600 came from Khotan), Tocharian (1224, all, however, from the Northern Silk Road); Khotanese (264 in addition to Khotanese and Khotanese/Chinese woodslips and wooden documents); some Tibetan and Chinese documents and two Sogdian documents.

Many of these proved to be parts of manuscripts of which fragments existed in other collections. Examples of this are **Or.8210/S. 9224** and **9225**³¹ both of which belong to the same manuscript and which were sent to Hoernle as part of consignments H.142 and H.143. One side contains a Chinese *Prajñāpāramitā* fragment and the other a Khotanese Buddhist *Trīṣaṇa*. Small pieces of the same document (**IOL Khot 215/17** and **18**)³² were excavated by Stein (Kha.i.305) which places the original find spot as Khadaliq. A more striking example are four leaves of the ‘Kashgar’ *Saddharmapundarika Sutra*, obtained from Badruddin **Or.15011/28-32**³³ (H.148 SA 22-25), about which Macartney wrote “I have written to Badrud Din that he should seek out the person from whom he obtained the sheets and endeavour to get from him the entire book.” Evidently unsuccessful, the greater part of this manuscript, as already mentioned, was sent to St. Petersburg by Petrovsky while other leaves were subsequently purchased by Trinkler, Skrine, Huntington and Otani.

Oscar Terry Crosby’s visit of 1903

In 1903, during an expedition to Central Asia, the US statesman Oscar Crosby visited Khotan and like most western travellers stayed with Badruddin. While there he purchased what he described in his book³⁴ as “a mass of old paper, mere scraps ... miraculously preserved with their messages from the dead!”

Crosby’s collection, now in the Library of Congress, comprised around 90 Sanskrit and 56 Khotanese fragments. It was a substantial collection and important because it included leaves from several different manuscripts which are also to be found in the Hoernle collection and more significantly among Stein’s second expedition finds at Khadaliq, giving an assured find-spot to at least some of the manuscripts.³⁵

Ellsworth Huntington expedition, 1905

Another important expedition was that led by the geographer Ellsworth Huntington (1876-1947) who visited Khotan in 1905. At Chira, near Domoko, he hired Ibrahim Beg, who had been employed by Stein on his first expedition and who joined Stein again in 1906 remaining with him for the next two years. Huntington visited the sites of Domoko, Darabzan-dong, Kōk Jigda, Kushu-aste and Khadaliq. At Khadaliq he found “some fragments

³¹http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.8210/S.9224 and http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.8210/S.9225.

³²http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=IOL+Khot+215/17. and http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=IOL+Khot+215/18.

³³http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.15011/28 and the following three images.

³⁴Crosby 1905, p. 60.

³⁵Wille 2009, esp. pp. 49–50.

of paper bearing records in Brahmi script, and two pieces of wood covered with the characteristic Kharosthi script of the first three centuries of the Christian era.”³⁶

These “fragments of paper” included some of the best-known manuscripts from Khotan, leaves of which turned up in several unprovenanced collections. One was a leaf from the Khotanese *Book of Zambasta* of which Huntington published a photograph in his expedition report.³⁷ Another was part of a leaf from the previously mentioned Sanskrit Kashgar *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*,³⁸ thus confirming Khadaliq as a likely place of origin.

Expedition of Francke and Körber in 1914

The Tibetan scholar August Francke, Professor of Tibetology at Berlin, and the Sinologist Hans Körber, like many earlier travellers, also stayed with Badruddin in Khotan in 1914 while they were collecting material on behalf of the Ethnographic Museum, Munich. In a letter written in August 1914 Francke gave an insightful account of his collecting method.³⁹

K[örber] told me, that he, meanwhile, had also made a find. He had taken the liberty of going through the papers stored in the writing room, our lodging, and he had come across an envelope containing several folios with old Brahmi script. We decided not to give back these folios, which had got among the waste paper here, but also not exactly to steal them. Our honesty was rewarded. While negotiating [sic] with the Aksakal about the price for these folios, he remembered another much larger bundle of similar folios. He agreed to sell the latter to us as well; and as we had already obtained a bundle of old Chinese and Tibetan documents from Sir George [Macartney], we were in the end pleased to be in possession of a considerable collection of old documents. At first glance we could make out that they were of two kinds. One group contained the official correspondence of former times, the other one, however, religious literature, probably fragments of Buddhist works. Most of the documents were written on paper, but for some of them wood was used as writing material.

Their collection of about 2000 items consisted of ceramics, Buddhist stuccos, metal-objects, coins etc., and about 350 manuscript fragments in Sanskrit, Khotanese, Chinese and Tibetan. Although their finds were purchased they carry sitemarks, presumably indicating where they were supposedly found.

Hoernle 3, ca. 1916, and Macartney, ca. 1918

Between 1914 and his death in November 1918, Hoernle acquired a further collection (Hoernle 3) of 473 Sanskrit and about 60 Khotanese manuscripts. These had no accompanying documentation but were almost certainly acquired from Khotan around 1916, after Stein’s third expedition, and were probably delivered to Hoernle by Macartney on his return from Kashgar in 1918.⁴⁰

Macartney also handed over a cache of manuscripts to the Librarian of the India Office F.W. Thomas around 1918. Both batches contained leaves from the same manuscripts and also from Stein’s 3rd expedition acquired from Khadaliq and Domoko.

³⁶ Huntington 1907, p. 173.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 207–208.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 204–5.

³⁹ Wille 2000, p. 3, translated from Francke 1921, p. 92 onwards.

⁴⁰ Sims-Williams 2009, pp. 8–12.

Nicholas Fitzmaurice, 1923

Nicholas Fitzmaurice (1887–1960) served as Vice-Consul at Kashgar from 1918 to 1922, and Consul-General in 1922 and 1931–33. He presented 2 Khotanese wooden tablets (**Or.9268A** and **B**⁴¹) to the British Museum in July 1923, presumably during his leave. These are both legal contracts, one about water rights and the second concerning an adoption. Unfortunately nothing is known directly about their provenance but from the context they have been assumed to come from Domoko and date from the early 8th century.

Harold Harding, 1923

Almost 20 years later Harold Harding, Vice-Consul at Kashgar in 1922 and 1923, passed through Kashmir in September 1923 on his way home and presented Stein with a collection of antiquities some of which Stein included in his report *Innermost Asia*, mentioning that he had acquired them from Badruddin. These included about 90 paper fragments (54 Khotanese, **Or.12637/10-21**) and 32 woodslips (19 Khotanese; 7 Tibetan, the rest undetermined, **Or.8211**) now in the British Library. Additionally he presented frescoes and antiquities, most of which were transferred to the new Central Asian Antiquities Museum, New Delhi. It seems possible that both Harding's manuscripts and antiquities came from the same source, though is not clear at which sites they were ultimately found.

By good fortune several photographs taken in Khotan by Clarmont Skrine, Harding's superior at Kashgar, in November 1922, have been preserved at the Royal Geographical Society.⁴² These show a collection of antiquities on display in what may have been Badruddin's house captioned as "from Yotkan, Domoko and other sites" which Skrine was considering purchasing on behalf of the Government of India. They include some of the same Harding antiquities that are now in Delhi in addition to other identifiable objects which were subsequently acquired by Skrine and Eric Trinkler.

Clarmont Skrine, 1925

Clarmont Skrine, Consul-General in Kashgar 1922–24, has already been mentioned in connection with Harold Harding. His collection, which has been described in detail elsewhere⁴³ was presented to the British Museum in June 1925. It was acquired from an Armenian carpet dealer in Khotan, Keraken Moldovack, and Badruddin who, Skrine wrote,⁴⁴ "allowed me to take for presentation to the British Museum a selection of ancient Buddhist manuscripts."

Altogether his collection consisted of 38 Khotanese items (including 10 wooden documents), 211 Sanskrit, a Tibetan fragment and one forgery. It also included antiquities which are now in the British Museum. Among his purchases were, as he wrote to his mother on 26 November 1922, "two practically complete books, in wonderful preservation, of exactly the same kind of script and material as some of the MSS described and pictured in *Serindia*."⁴⁵ These in fact included leaves from the Kashgar *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* and the 'Book of Zambasta' mentioned earlier as discovered by Huntington at Khadaliq.

⁴¹ [http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.9268\(A\)](http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.9268(A)) and [http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.9268\(B\)](http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.9268(B)).

⁴² Waugh and Sims-Williams 2010, pp. 77–78.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 69–96.

⁴⁴ Skrine 1926, p. 170.

⁴⁵ Waugh and Sims-Williams 2010, p. 69.

Emil Trinkler, 1928

During their expedition to Central Asia from 1927 to 1928, Emil Trinkler and Walter Bosshard also stayed with Badruddin in Khotan in 1928. Through him they acquired a large number of manuscripts and other antiquities.⁴⁶ The carpet manufacturer Keraken Moldovack additionally gave them “several heads of Buddha, and told us that they had been found in Ak Sipil.”⁴⁷ A few more manuscripts were purchased from Ekram Hadji who “gave me some interesting manuscripts, which were reputed to have come from the old Tibetan fort of the Mazar Tagh, and consisted of little wooden sticks and tablets, on which were written Tibetan characters, a square wooden block, inscribed with Brahmin characters, and a large paper document in Tibetan characters.”⁴⁸

The only items found in situ appear to have been discovered at Dandan Uiliq where “Kadre Akhon unearthed a manuscript in tatters with letters in Uigurian [Sogdian] script, and a wooden lock.... In several places we found plaited sandals and Chinese manuscripts.”⁴⁹

George Sherriff and Frederick Williamson, 1930 and 1931

Several years later Frederick Williamson, Consul-General in Kashgar from 1927 to 1930 and Major George Sherriff his deputy who succeeded him (from 1930 to 1931) gave the British Museum two collections of Khotanese documents acquired during their official duties. Both were keen photographers and travellers. Sherriff, who is today most famous as a botanist and plant collector, was very helpful to Stein in 1931 with photographing the finds from his fourth expedition.

In 1930 Williamson handed over to the British Museum 41 documents stuck together in a roll, and in May 1931 Sherriff sent L. D. Barnett at the British Museum several more which, he said, “were brought to me in Khotan last March and were said to have been found in or near Domoko.”⁵⁰ They had been given to him personally by Badruddin.

Together these 59 documents (41 from Williamson and 18 from Sherriff) formed part of an archive containing the correspondence and records of officials from the Six Villages, the area to the East of Khotan. They date from the very end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century, from the period of Tibetan occupation and are closely related to documents acquired by Ambolt (see below). They mostly record payment of taxes, delivery of essential commodities and rosters for men on inspection duty.

Nils Ambolt, 1931

The Swedish surveyor Nils Ambolt (1900–1969) was part of the joint Sino-Swedish expedition between 1927 and 1935, led by Sven Hedin (1865–1952). He stayed with Badruddin in Khotan in the winter of 1931/32 and again in May-June 1933 before returning home. His collection of 30 paper and 45 wooden documents (mostly in Khotanese), now in Stockholm, were thought to be part of the Hedin collection and are generally referred to as such. However Rong Xinjiang of Peking University while checking the registers in the Museum of

⁴⁶Gropp 1974.

⁴⁷Trinkler 1931, p. 180.

⁴⁸*Ibid*, p. 186.

⁴⁹*Ibid*, p. 195.

⁵⁰BL Archives/Official letters. Private correspondence. Letter 20 May 1931 from Capt. G. Sherriff, R.A., British Consulate-General Kashgar to L.D. Barnett, British Museum.

Ethnography in 1989, discovered that most of them were, in fact, collected by Nils Ambolt.⁵¹ They were most probably purchased from Badruddin.

Conclusion

The Ambolt collection concludes a long list of largely unprovenanced manuscripts acquired from Khotan during the first half of the 20th century. By constant reference to manuscripts in the Stein collection, the result of archaeological excavation, it has been possible to pinpoint some of these later finds. I would just like to mention a few outstanding cases.

The first of these is the famous ‘Kashgar’ Sanskrit *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*. Dating from the 8th or early 9th century, it is one of the largest manuscripts to be found measuring 56.1 x 18 cm. It was probably first discovered at Khadalik around 1893 and the greater part sold to Petrovsky who sent it to St. Petersburg. Altogether 447 of the original 459 leaves survive. Independently, Badruddin had supplied the British consul at Kashgar, George Macartney, with four leaves of the same manuscript in 1906 and Skrine’s 40 leaves were also probably acquired from him. We know that it came from Khadalik because the geographer Ellsworth Huntington was taken there in 1905 and found part of another leaf of the same manuscript.



Fig. 6. Composite of the right half of folio 282 verso of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*, showing Skrine’s part (British Library **Or.9613/27**⁵²) on the left and the Huntington fragment (Huntington F) on the right. Right side based on Yuyama and Toda 1977, plate II.

A second example is the famous Khotanese Buddhist text, the *Book of Zambasta*, a popular manual of Buddhism, named after the patron who is mentioned in several colophons.

⁵¹ Wang 2004, 106, fn. 3.

⁵² http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.9613/27.



Fig. 7. Or.9614/5⁵³. Folio 299 of the Khotanese Book of Zambasta, written in South Turkestan Brahmi script v, probably dating from the 8th century. © The British Library Board

The Huntington find in 1905 mentioned above confirms the original findspot as Khadaliq. Further leaves were purchased by Petrovsky (192 leaves), the Government of India in 1903 (1 leaf), the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta ca. 1910 (6 leaves), Clarmont Skrine ca. 1922 (6 leaves), Emil Trinkler in 1928 (1 leaf), and Zuicho Tachibana on one of Count Otani's Central Asian expeditions (1 leaf). As recently as 2012, two more leaves of this manuscript came to light which are in private possession.

Perhaps the most dramatic case of a composite manuscript is a reconstructed leaf from the Sanskrit *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra* ('Sutra of the golden light'). As pieced together by Oktor Skjærvø, it is almost complete, consisting of six separate fragments.⁵⁴ The fragments marked Kha. were excavated by Stein at Khadaliq in September 1906 and those marked H.147, H 150 and the unnumbered fragment were from separate consignments sent to Rudolf Hoernle in 1905, 1907 and 1916. Many fragments of the same manuscript were also collected by Count Otani Kozui (1876–1948) which are now in Lüshun Museum, China and Ryukoku University Library, Japan.



Fig. 8. Folio 45verso from a manuscript of the Sanskrit *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra* written in Early South Turkestani Brahmi script dating from the 7th or 8th century.

⁵³ http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.9614/5.

⁵⁴ Skjærvø 2009, pp. 610-624; plate 376.

This paper has focused on collections formed in the early 20th century but an exciting development has been the recent acquisition in China of further collections of manuscripts from Khotan, many of which, like the earlier ones, lack details of provenance. Work on these collections is in progress.⁵⁵ A notable example is the National Library of China **BH1-19**,⁵⁶ a page of a letter describing the Uighur invasion of Kashgar in 802.⁵⁷ Almost certainly a second folio of Stein's Dandan Uiliq Judaeo-Persian letter (**Or.8212/166**)⁵⁸, mentioned earlier, we can be reasonably certain that it too came from there. More recently the scholar Li Can⁵⁹ has identified the fragment **BH4-11**, one of a collection recently acquired privately by the National Library of China, as belonging to the same folio as Khad.042 (**Or.8212/1695**)⁶⁰ a fragment of the Sanskrit *Bhadrakalpikasūtra* which was brought to Stein in 1915 from Khadaliq, thus demonstrating that there is still material coming to light which relates to these earlier expeditions.

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⁵⁵ Bi and Sims-Williams 2010 and 2015; Duan and Zhang 2013; Duan 2015.

⁵⁶ http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=BH1-19.

⁵⁷ Zhang and Shi 2008 and Yoshida forthcoming.

⁵⁸ http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.8212/166.

⁵⁹ Li Can 2015.

⁶⁰ http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Or.8212/1695.

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